

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01

AID-20 MC-02 ACDA-19 IO-14 TRSE-00 IGA-02 EB-11

COME-00 DRC-01 /156 W

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P R 270444Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3530

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC

S E C R E T SEOUL 2684

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, KS

SUBJECT: F-4 AND A-7 PURCHASE DECISION

REF: SEOUL 2670

JOINT EMBASSY/COMUSK MESSAGE

1. IN JOINT US/ROK AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR KOREAN FORCES
MODERNIZATION, WHICH HAS BEEN RECONSIDERING MOD PLAN
PRIORITY LIST FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, WE HAVE
THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED WITH THE KOREANS THE RELATIVE
VIRTUES OF THE F-4 VS. F-5E AS AN ADD ON AIRCRAFT
TO THE 72 F-5ES ALREADY PLANNED FOR DELIVERY UNDER
THE MOD PROGRAM. IN THESE DISCUSSIONS UNC OFFICERS
HAVE POINTEDLY AND REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED COST EFFEC-
TIVENESS OF F-5E. DESPITE THIS ROKG HAS CONSISTENTLY
HELD OUT FOR F-4 WHICH THEY FIRMLY BELIEVE IS BETTER
AIRCRAFT FROM MILITARY POINT OF VIEW AND MOST
SUITABLE TO THEIR NEEDS. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND,
WE BELIEVE PRESIDENT PARK'S PERSONAL DECISION
APRIL 19 TO PROCEED WITH PURCHASE OF 57 F-4S IS FIRM,

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ALTHOUGH FINAL COST FIGURE AND CREDIT AVAILABILITY

MAY RESULT IN SOME VARIATION IN NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT
ROKS ACTUALLY BUY.

2. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE
NOT MADE DECISION AS WE MIGHT HAVE, WE BELIEVE WE
SHOULD CONCUR AND PROVIDE LETTER OF OFFER FOR F-4S
WHICH ROKS ARE REQUESTING. KOREANS HAVE POSSESSED
AND DEMONSTRATED THEIR ABILITY TO OPERATE AND MAINTAIN
THE AIRCRAFT SINCE 1969. GIVEN LEVEL OF KOREAN
DEVELOPMENT AND SOPHISTICATION AND REALITY OF
MILITARY SITUATION THEY FACE IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT
TO DENY THEM AIRCRAFT WHICH WE HAVE SOLD TO SO
MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, AND ARE NOW WIDELY OFFERING
FOR FINAL SALE.

3. IN DECIDING ON INITIAL QUESTION OF PURCHASE WE
SHOULD ALSO HAVE IN MIND THAT ROKG WILL MOST
PROBABLY SEEK TO FINANCE ALL OR AT LAST LARGE PART
OF PURCHASE WITH FMS CREDIT. WE REALIZE THAT FULL
OR EVEN LARGE PERCENTAGE COVERAGE WITH FMS CREDIT
IS UNREALISTIC IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THAT
ROKG PROBABLY AWARE OF THIS. THAT WILL NOT DETER
THEM FROM TRYING HOWEVER, AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE
WASHINGTON'S VIEWS ON WHAT WILL BE POSSIBLE IN
THIS REGARD, EITHER THROUGH FMS OR OTHER POSSIBLE
CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS.

4. A-7 SITUATION ALSO MENTIONED REFTEL NOW APPEARS
INCREASINGLY LESS CLEAR. WE HAVE HAD RESERVATIONS
FROM FIRST MENTION OF THIS VENTURE ABOUT THE APPARENT
HASTY, UNSYSTEMATIC WAY IT DEVELOPED. SINCE TRANS-
MITTING REFTEL WE HAVE RECEIVED COPY OF LETTER MND
ACTUALLY GAVE LING TEMPCO VOUGHT REP ON A-7S,
AND IT DOES NOT, WE NOW FIND, INDICATE FIRM DECISION
MADE; INSTEAD LETTER SIMPLY COMMISSIONS LTV TO
OBTAIN COST AND AVAILABILITY DATA. IN VIEW RATHER
VAGUE STATUS THIS "DECISION", BELIEVE WE NEED NOT
ADDRESS ISSURE AT THIS TIME.
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